

A Web-based Note and Task Organizer for Efficient Personal Productivity

Pavlo Merzlykin^{1,*}, Mykhailo Moiseienko¹, Mykola Yakovetskyi¹ and Kateryna Vlasenko²

¹ Kryvyi Rih State Pedagogical University, 54 Universytetskyi Ave., Kryvyi Rih, 50086, Ukraine

² National University of 'Kyiv Mohyla Academy', 2 Hryhoriya Skovorody Str., Kyiv, 04070, Ukraine

Abstract

In the era of rapid information technology development and growing volumes of information, effective task and time management has become increasingly important. People constantly face the challenge of tracking and completing various tasks in work and personal life. According to research, only 14% of people effectively plan and adhere to scheduled tasks. This paper presents a solution to address these challenges – a web-based note and task organizer. The objective of the study is to design and implement a web service for note organizations, addressing the limitations of existing solutions, including scalability, offline accessibility, and advanced analytics. The system is built using ASP.NET Core for the backend, Angular for the frontend, and Entity Framework for database management. The architecture is designed for flexibility, modularity, and high performance. User testing indicates significant improvements in productivity compared to other tools, with users reporting enhanced organization, reduced missed deadlines, and valuable insights from task analytics.

Keywords

task management, productivity, web application, ASP.NET Core, Angular, Entity Framework

1. Introduction

In the modern information-driven world, the ability to manage tasks and time effectively has become a critical skill for personal and professional success. The rapid growth of information technology has led to an increase in the volume of tasks and information that individuals need to process daily, making efficient task management and time organization more crucial than ever before.

The planning fallacy, first conceived by Kahneman and Tversky [1], is the tendency of individuals and organizations to underestimate the duration of a task, even when they have previous experience with similar tasks running. This planning misconception leads to ineffective time management, missed deadlines, and increased stress level. The consequences of poor task management extend beyond personal productivity, affecting organizational efficiency and overall quality of life.

The market for task management software has been growing rapidly in response to this need. According to industry reports [2], the global market size stood at \$1,7 billion in 2018 and is projected to reach \$4,5 billion by 2026, exhibiting a CAGR of 13.3%. This growth reflects the increasing recognition of the importance of digital tools in enhancing personal and professional productivity.

While there are numerous task management applications available, many of them have limitations that include:

- lack of flexibility in task organization and categorization
- limited offline functionality, requiring constant internet connectivity

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* Corresponding author.

✉ ipmcourses@gmail.com (P. Merzlykin); seliverst17moiseienko@gmail.com (M. Moiseienko); vlasenkov@ukr.net (K. Vlasenko)

🆔 0000-0002-4017-7172 (P. Merzlykin); 0000-0003-4401-0297 (M. Moiseienko); 0000-0002-8920-5680 (K. Vlasenko)



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- insufficient analytics and reporting features for tracking productivity
- overly complex interfaces that hinder rather than facilitate task management
- poor integration with other productivity tools and services.

These limitations create a gap in the market for a comprehensive, user-friendly, and feature-rich task management solution that addresses the needs of modern users.

This paper presents the design and implementation of a web-based note and task organizer aimed at improving personal productivity. The system is designed to overcome the limitations of existing solutions while providing an intuitive and powerful platform for task management. The main objectives of this research are:

- to design a scalable and flexible system architecture using modern web technologies
- to implement a feature-rich yet intuitive user interface that enhances rather than complicates task management
- to evaluate the system's effectiveness through comprehensive user testing and feedback analysis

2. Related Work

This section reviews relevant research in the scope of time and productivity management and some of the popular existing tools.

2.1. Research in Time Management and Productivity

Research in time management and productivity provides valuable insights into effective task organization:

Clemens and Dalrymple [3] emphasize the importance of “temporal intelligence” in leadership and productivity. They argue that understanding and effectively managing time is a crucial skill for success in both personal and professional contexts.

Robbins [4] introduces the “5 Second Rule” as a strategy to overcome procrastination. This approach suggests counting backwards from 5 before starting a task, which is supposed to facilitate bypassing the brain's tendency to overthink and delay action.

Tracy [5] stresses the power of self-discipline in personal effectiveness. He argues that developing strong habits and routines is a key to maintaining productivity over time.

Buehler et al. [6] explore the psychological aspects of task planning, particularly the tendency to underestimate task completion times. Their research provides insights into why effective planning is challenging for many individuals.

Brady et al. [7] emphasize the significance of time management in self-regulated learning among students, highlighting a bias in their time estimations for academic tasks. It finds that while task beliefs do not affect estimation accuracy, both prior and anticipated task difficulty significantly influence this time estimation bias.

Prychepa et al. [8] consider procrastination as a phenomenon of a deadline postponement despite the fact that it will lead to negative consequences. The paper stresses the necessity of analyzing a manager's time, distinguishing unproductive losses and minimizing them. The authors propose a decision making algorithm, which helps a manager to improve their time management and prevent unproductive losses. The authors review stages of planning and rational use of the manager's time: goals formation, direct planning, making decisions for the further steps, the execution of scheduled steps, monitoring and summing up.

Accurate time estimates are vital for meeting deadlines and reducing work-related stress, but people often succumb to widespread cognitive bias and planning errors, which leads to poor time

management [9]. The work by Ahmetoglu et al. [10] is devoted to studies aimed at solving the problem of planning error. As a result of psychological literature analysis, four key strategies were identified. These strategies have served as the basis for functional analysis of the most popular personal task management applications and their compliance with identified strategies. The analysis showed that the science-based strategies recommended are rarely implemented well in tested applications. This discrepancy highlights the importance of bridging this gap between theory and practice. Emphasizing the need for future efforts to assist workers in assessing the duration of assignments, this study has identified opportunities for improving the development of task management software to increase user productivity and reduce stress.

2.2. Existing Task Management Tools

Several task management applications have gained popularity in recent years, each with its own strengths and limitations:

Todoist

Launched in 2007, Todoist offers a powerful set of features for task organization, including projects, filters, reminders, and calendar integration. It supports multiple platforms and has over 30 million users. However, some users report issues with sync reliability and find the interface cluttered with advanced features.

Microsoft To Do

An evolution of the popular Wunderlist app, Microsoft To Do integrates well with the Microsoft 365 ecosystem. It offers basic task list functionality and seamless integration with Outlook and Teams. However, it lacks advanced reporting features and customization options.

Any.do

Focusing on simplicity and quick task capture, Any.do provide a clean design with features like voice input and location-based reminders. While excellent for basic task management, it offers limited support for complex project organization and offline access.

Trello

Using a Kanban board approach, Trello excels at visualizing workflows and collaborative task management. It's popular in the IT and media industries, with over 50 million users. However, it's less suited for personal task management and lacks detailed progress tracking for individual tasks.

Recent task management tools have introduced innovative features that address some of the limitations of older solutions. For example, **Notion**, a popular all-in-one workspace, offers a highly customizable and flexible approach to task management, allowing users to create custom databases and views [11]. Another tool, **ClickUp**, provides extensive project management capabilities alongside task tracking, including Gantt charts, workload management, and advanced reporting [12].

While these tools offer compelling features, they often have a steeper learning curve and are better suited for complex project management than personal productivity. In contrast, our solution aims to strike a balance between simplicity and functionality, focusing on core task management features and seamless user experience.

2.3. Gap in Current Solutions

Despite the availability of various task management tools and extensive research in productivity, there remains a gap for a comprehensive solution that:

- balances simplicity of use with rich functionality
- offers detailed interactive analytics to improve productivity over time
- allows for flexible task organization that adapts to individual working styles
- integrates psychological insights from productivity research into its design

This research aims to address this gap by developing a web-based note and task organizer that incorporates these elements, providing a more holistic approach to personal productivity management.

3. System Architecture and Design

This section outlines the system's architecture, functional requirements, and technology stack.

3.1. Functional Requirements

Based on analysis of existing tools and user needs, the following key functional requirements were identified:

- **User Authentication and Security:**
 - secure user register and login system
 - password encryption and protection of user data
 - support for multiple user roles (e.g., individual users, team managers)
- **Task Management:**
 - create, view, update, and delete tasks (CRUD operations)
 - set task priorities, deadlines, and recurrence patterns
 - attach files or notes to tasks
 - mark tasks as complete and track completion status
- **Task Organization:**
 - organize tasks into customizable lists or projects
 - tag tasks with labels for easy categorization
 - sub-tasks and task dependencies support
- **Search and Filtering:**
 - advanced search across all tasks and notes
 - filter tasks by various criteria (e.g., due date, priority, tags)
 - sort tasks based on different attributes
- **Reminders and Notifications:**
 - task deadline reminders
 - email and push notifications for upcoming tasks

- daily or weekly task summary notifications
- **Analytics and Reporting:**
 - generate productivity reports and visualizations
 - track task completion rates and trends over time – provide insights on personal productivity patterns
- **User Interface:**
 - intuitive, responsive design that works across devices
 - customizable views (e.g., list view, kanban board)
 - dark mode and other personalization options
- **Integration and Extensibility:**
 - calendar integration (e.g., Google Calendar, Outlook)
 - API for third-party integrations
 - export/import functionality for tasks and data

These requirements aim to create a comprehensive task management system that is both powerful and user-friendly, addressing the shortcomings identified in existing solutions.

3.2. Technology Stack

The system leverages a modern web technology stack to ensure scalability, performance, and maintainability:

Backend: ASP.NET Core

ASP.NET Core is a cross-platform, high-performance framework for building modern, cloud-based, internet-connected applications. It supports building RESTful APIs with easy integration of dependency injection, logging, configuration, and demonstrates excellent performance and scalability characteristics.

Frontend: Angular

Angular is a component-based TypeScript framework for building single-page applications. It provides a modular architecture that enhances maintainability testability, and robust ecosystem with a wide range of third-party libraries and tools.

Database: MS SQL Server with Entity Framework

This solution is a reliable and scalable relational database management system. The *Entity Framework* provides an object-relational mapping (ORM) for simplified data access and management and supports complex queries and transactions required for task management.

UI Frameworks: Bootstrap and Materialize

Bootstrap ensures responsive design and cross-browser compatibility. *Materialize* provides enhanced UI components following Material Design principles. The combination allows for the rapid development of an attractive and functional user interface.

Authentication: JSON Web Tokens (JWT)

JWT provides secure, stateless authentication mechanism, which facilitates easy scaling and load balancing.

Version Control and CI/CD: Git and Azure DevOps

Git is used for distributed version control. Azure DevOps ensures continuous integration and deployment pipelines.

This technology stack enables the development of a scalable, maintainable, and high-performance web application [13] capable of handling complex task management requirements.

The diagram (figure 1) provides a visual representation of the key components (Angular frontend, ASP.NET Core backend, and MS SQL Server database) and their interactions.

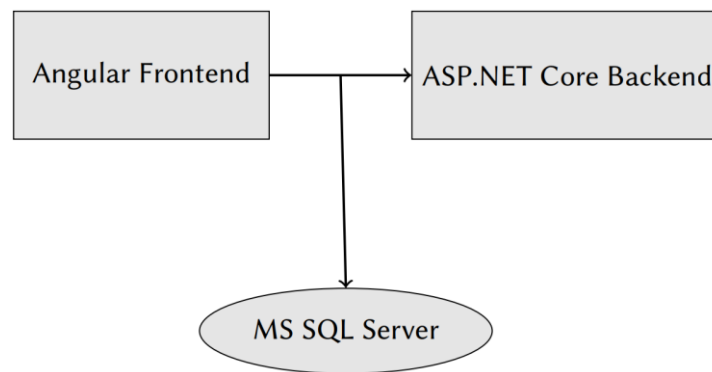


Figure 1: System Architecture Diagram

3.3. Database Design

The database schema (figure 2) is designed using the Entity Framework Code First approach, allowing for easy modifications and migrations. The main entities in the database are:

- **User:**
 - stores user account information (username, email, password hash)
 - tracks user preferences and settings
- **ToDoItem:**
 - represents a task with attributes such as title, description, creation date, due date, priority, and status
 - links to the user who created the task
 - contains foreign keys to associated lists or projects
- **ToDoList:**
 - represents a category or project that groups related tasks
 - contains a name, description, and creation date – links to the user who owns the list

4. Implementation

This section details the implementation of both the backend and frontend components of the system.

4.1. Backend Implementation

The backend of the application is implemented as a RESTful API using ASP.NET Core, following the Model-View-Controller (MVC) architectural pattern. This approach allows for a clear separation of

concerns and enhances the maintainability of the codebase. Key components of the backend implementation include:

- **Models** are C# classes that define the structure of the data entities (User, ToDoItem, ToDoList, etc.). These models directly correspond to the database tables through Entity Framework's Code First approach.
- **Controllers** handle HTTP requests, process them using the appropriate services, and return HTTP responses. For example, the ToDoItemController manages CRUD operations for tasks.

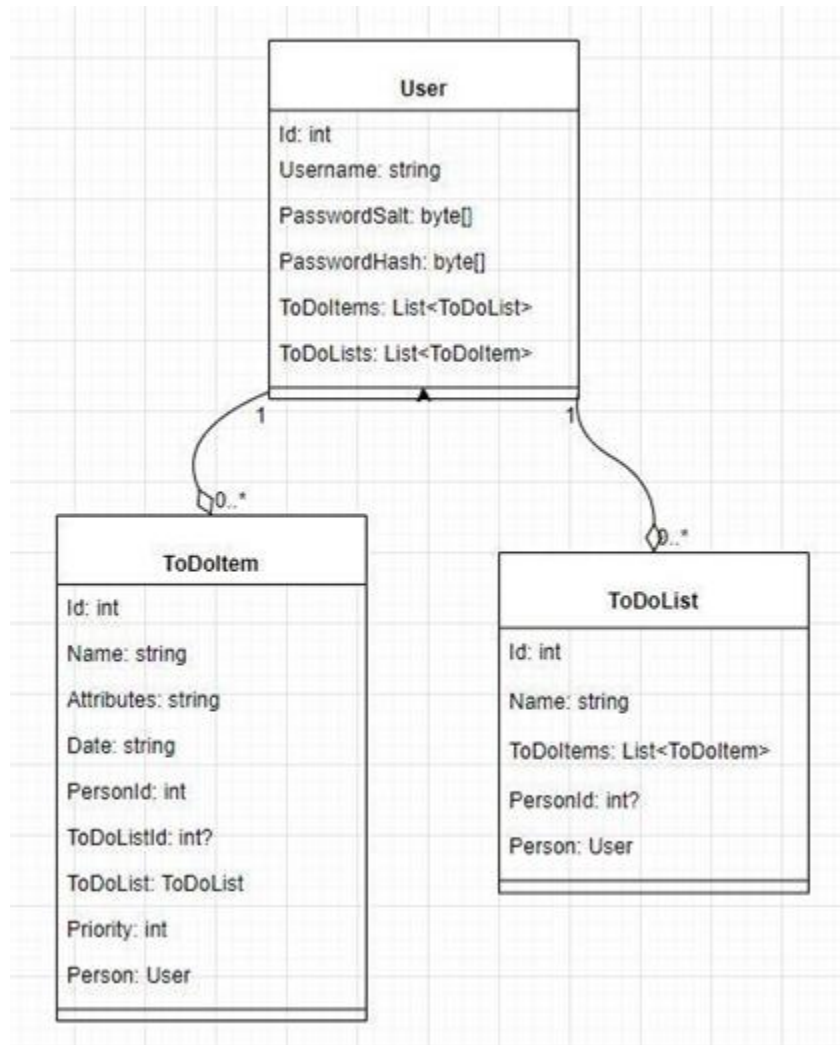


Figure 2: Database Class Diagram

- **Services** contain the core business logic of the application. They handle operations such as creating tasks, managing lists, and generating reports. Services promote code reusability and maintainability.

The backend handles the following features:

- **Authentication and Authorization:** JWT-based authentication is implemented to secure the API. Each request is validated using middleware that checks for a valid JWT token.

- **Task Management:** CRUD operations for tasks are implemented with additional logic for recurring tasks, task dependencies, and batch operations.
- **List and Project Management:** APIs for creating, updating, and managing task lists and projects, including moving tasks between lists.
- **Search and Filtering:** Advanced search functionality is implemented using LINQ queries, allowing for complex filtering and sorting of tasks based on multiple criteria.
- **Analytics and Reporting:** Endpoints for generating productivity reports, including task completion rates, time tracking, and trend analysis.
- **Offline Sync:** A custom synchronization mechanism is implemented to handle offline changes and resolve conflicts when users come back online.

4.2. Frontend Implementation

The application's frontend is built using Angular, providing a dynamic and responsive user interface. The implementation focuses on creating a smooth, intuitive user experience while leveraging Angular's powerful features.

Key aspects of the frontend implementation include:

- **Component-Based Architecture:** The UI is divided into reusable components to promote modularity and maintainability.
- **Reactive Forms:** Angular's reactive forms are used for handling user input, providing real-time validation and a reactive approach to form management.
- **Routing:** Angular Router is implemented for navigation between different views, enabling a single-page application experience.
- **Services:** Angular services are used to manage state and handle communication with the backend API.
- **Observables:** RxJS observables are extensively used for handling asynchronous operations and implementing reactive programming patterns.
- **Interceptors:** HTTP interceptors are used to handle global concerns, such as adding authentication tokens to requests and handling errors.

The frontend handles the following features:

- **Drag-and-Drop Interface:** Implemented using Angular CDK, allowing users to easily reorder tasks and move them between lists.
- **Real-time Updates:** WebSocket integration for instant updates when tasks are modified by other users or through integrations.
- **Offline Support:** Service Workers are used to cache application assets and data, enabling offline functionality. IndexedDB is used for local task storage and sync status.
- **Responsive Design:** Utilizing Bootstrap and custom CSS to ensure the application is usable across devices of various sizes.
- **Animations:** Angular's animation system is used to create smooth transitions between views and states, enhancing the user experience.
- **Lazy Loading:** Modules are lazy-loaded to improve initial load time and overall performance.

The UI is designed with a focus on usability and productivity. UI features a clean, minimalistic design to reduce cognitive load, customizable views to suit different working styles, quick-add functionality, keyboard shortcuts and interactive data visualizations for productivity analytics.

5. Results and Evaluation

The web-based note and task organizer were subjected to rigorous testing and evaluation to assess its functionality, performance, and user satisfaction. This section presents the results of the results and discusses the system's effectiveness in enhancing personal productivity.

5.1. Functional Testing

Comprehensive functional testing was conducted to ensure all features of the application worked as intended. Key results include:

- 100% success rate for CRUD operations on tasks and lists
- accurate implementation of recurring task logic and task dependencies
- robust search and filtering capabilities, returning correct results for complex queries
- successful offline functionality with proper conflict resolution upon sync
- accurate generation of productivity reports and analytics

All core features, including task creation, organization, deadline management, reminders, search, and reporting, were validated across different browsers and devices.

5.2. Performance Testing

Performance testing was conducted to evaluate the system's responsiveness and scalability. Key metrics include:

- average response time of 200ms for API calls under normal load
- ability to handle 1000 concurrent users with less than 1% error rate
- successful load test simulating 10,000 tasks created over a 1-hour period
- frontend initial load time of under 2 seconds on an average broadband connection
- efficient memory usage, with backend services consuming less than 500MB of RAM under normal load

These results indicate that the system is capable of handling a large number of users and tasks without significant performance degradation.

5.3. User Evaluation

A user study was conducted with a group of 50 participants over a 4-week period. Participants included students, professionals, and freelancers with varying levels of experience with task management tools. Key findings from the user evaluation include:

- 92% of users reported improved task organization and productivity
- 88% found the interface intuitive and easy to use
- 85% found the analytics and reporting features valuable for understanding their productivity patterns
- 90% stated they would choose this tool over their previous task management solution

Qualitative feedback highlighted the following strengths:

- "The flexibility in organizing tasks suits my workflow perfectly."
- "The productivity insights have helped me identify and eliminate time-wasting habits."
- "The interface is clean and doesn't distract from the actual task management."

A deeper analysis of user feedback revealed several areas for improvement:

- **Integration:** While users appreciated the existing third-party integrations, they expressed a desire for a wider range of supported tools and services. Specifically, users requested integrations with popular calendar applications, project management software, and communication platforms to streamline their workflows.
- **Customization:** Some users felt that the current customization options for the dashboard and task views were limited. They suggested allowing greater flexibility in arranging and displaying information, such as the ability to create custom fields, tags, and filters to better suit their individual needs.
- **Mobile Experience:** Although the web application was appreciated, users highlighted the importance of a dedicated mobile app for on-the-go task management. They emphasized the need for a native mobile experience with offline functionality, push notifications, and seamless synchronization with the web application.

These insights provide valuable direction for future development efforts, ensuring that the system continues to evolve and meet users' changing needs.

5.4. Comparison with Existing Solutions

When compared to popular existing tools like Todoist, Microsoft To Do, Any.do, and Trello, our solution showed several advantages:

- less system resources usage
- the possibility of self-hosting, and, therefore, better privacy
- better balance between feature richness and interface simplicity

Users who had experience with these tools rated our solution significantly higher in terms of overall satisfaction and productivity enhancement.

5.5. Impact on Productivity

To quantify the impact on productivity, we analyzed task completion rates and user-reported productivity scores:

- users reported an average 27% increase in task completion rate
- 78% of users reported feeling more in control of their workload
- time spent searching for specific tasks decreased by an average of 35%
- 82% of users reported a reduction in missed deadlines

These results suggest that the web-based note and task organizer effectively address common productivity challenges and provide benefits to users.

Acknowledgements

This paper presented the design, implementation, and evaluation of a web-based note and task organizer designed to enhance personal productivity. The system successfully addresses key limitations of existing solutions by providing a scalable architecture, flexible features, detailed analytics, and robust offline support.

Key contributions of this work include:

- a comprehensive task management solution that balances feature richness with usability

- better privacy due to the possibility of self-hosting
- insights into user preferences and productivity patterns in digital task management
- a scalable and maintainable architecture using modern web technologies

The positive user feedback and quantitative improvements in productivity metrics validate the effectiveness of our approach. The system demonstrates significant potential for improving personal organization and task management efficiency.

Future work could explore several directions:

- development of native mobile applications to complement the web interface
- integration of machine learning algorithms for task prioritization and productivity recommendations
- expansion of third-party integrations to create a more comprehensive productivity ecosystem
- implementation of team collaboration features for project management scenarios
- exploration of voice interface and natural language processing for task input and management [14]

Declaration on Generative AI

The authors have not employed any Generative AI tools.

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